



NORTHERN RANGELANDS TRUST EDUCATION PROGRAM STRATEGY

Supporting access to education for rural, semi-nomadic communities in northern Kenya

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THE CHALLENGE

Across the vast, semi-arid landscape of northern and eastern Kenya, a combination of **geographic, socio-economic and political factors hinder access to formal education for many children.**

Educational disparity in urban and rural areas in Kenya is stark. While the adult literacy rate in Nairobi is 96.1% for example, it is just 8.2% in Garissa County, home to nomadic pastoral communities. It isn't just that **rural areas in Kenya lack the infrastructure to provide formal education**; it is also that pastoral communities – which constitute the predominant population of northern and eastern Kenya – are semi nomadic, making it difficult for children to stay in one school for the required period of time. Furthermore, **formal education has historically been a low priority for these groups, especially with regards to young girls.**

Currently, there is **little government funding to meet the needs of schools**, and where there is funding for infrastructure, urban schools typically take priority. Ineffective and inefficient Government policies do not serve the needs of pastoral nomadic communities, and teacher retention in rural schools is a challenge, not least because accommodation facilities in those schools are lacking or non-existent.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education) 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work and economic growth) all emphasise investing in schools. UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) movement also aims to coordinate international efforts to meet the learning needs of all children. There are goals in Kenya too - the Kenya Constitution (2010), expressly guarantees all Kenyans their social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to health, education, food and decent livelihoods. While Kenya's 'Vision 2030' aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized middle-income country, providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by the year 2030.

None of these can be realised unless a substantial investment is made in basic and tertiary education in Kenya's arid and semi arid lands (ASALs).



THE SOLUTION

There are now 39 community conservancies across northern Kenya. These are community-based organisations, created to support the management of community-owned land for the benefit of livelihoods. Governed by a locally elected-board of directors and run by a local management team, these conservancies are running peace and security programmes, sustainable rangelands management initiatives, wildlife conservation projects and building sustainable enterprises. Ultimately, **community conservancies aim to link healthy ecosystems to improved livelihoods, be that job creation, more consistent pasture for livestock owners, business loans, or access to education.**

These conservancies are supported by the Northern Rangelands Trust, who fundraise for their operations and provide training and access to expertise in relevant areas. Community conservancies provide a framework to focus development efforts to where they will have the greatest impact, which is why supporting education through these institutions is starting to see transformational results.

NRT launched the first phase of its Education Programme in 2012, working with **9 community conservancies** to identify beneficiary schools and help the selected schools assess and prioritise their needs. With funding from partners, NRT have been able to support **40 schools** in the following areas:

- Infrastructure development
- School supplies
- Training for teachers
- Tuition bursaries
- Conservation education

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To date, **over 6,000 students have benefited from the Education Programme**, and schools have recorded a significant improvement in teacher to student contact hours, student enrolment and attendance and graduation into the next grade. Furthermore, providing access to education through the community conservancy model makes a tangible link between improved livelihoods and wildlife and habitat conservation, increasing local support for conservancy operations.

NRT works closely with local government and leadership throughout the process. The conservancy board and management oversee the day to day supervision of projects, while NRT manage the finances, quality control, construction plans, compliance, technical supervision and monitoring and evaluation.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

The Kenyan Government attempted the introduction of free primary education (FPE) in 1973 and in 1979. Neither succeeded. FPE was successfully rolled out in 2003, and enrolment increased across the country. An upward trend in the registration of primary schools was also directly attributed to FPE. Although it has been considered a success (compared to first two attempts), in reality the FPE has not accounted for insufficient infrastructure or teacher shortages, and there are frequent delays in fund disbursement and often hidden costs for parents that were not provided for in the initial budget.

SUPPORT AREAS FOR THE NRT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

NRT Plans to supports its beneficiary schools through project areas:

Infrastructure projects	Capacity building	Conservation Education	School support	Bursaries
Teachers accommodation	Student mentorship	Bus tours to Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and/or Samburu National Reserve	Feeding program	Secondary schools
Kitchen	Parent coaching	School and Community Compounds clean up.	School supplies	Colleges
Water	Teacher training	School Wildlife Clubs development	National Exam preparations	
Classrooms	Local leadership engagement	Soccer Conservation-themed tournaments	Schools uniforms	
Dormitories		Conservation Debate competition		
Science laboratory				
Ablution				
Fence				



WHAT FUNDS CAN DO



NRT's vision, mission and core values

Vision

Community conservancies become the leading local institutions for building resilient communities and ecosystems on community land.

Mission

To develop resilient Community Conservancies that transform lives, secure peace, and conserve natural resources

Core values

- *Respect for traditional livelihoods and other community values*
- *Coexistence of livestock, people and wildlife*
- *Community-led decision making*
- *Meaningful livelihoods enhanced through conservation*
- *Competent governance and financial accountability*
- *Equitable distribution of benefits*
- *Environmental, social and economic sustainability in all our work*
- *Apolitical, without allegiance to any political party, creed, or ethnic background*
- *Credible, measurable results*
- *Credible partnerships with Government*

